

NEWS RELEASE

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Carol A. Murray, Commissioner

For Immediate Release

October 9, 2001

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OCTOBER 10 IS FIRST ANNUAL “PUT THE BREAKS ON FATALITIES DAY”
GOAL IS TO RAISE AWARENESS AND REDUCE CRASH-RELATED DEATHS

It's a grim fact, but you have a much greater chance of being injured or killed in a motor vehicle crash than being a victim of a violent crime.

In 1999, there was one murder every 34 minutes, while one person died from a traffic crash every 13 minutes. There was one violent crime every 22 seconds, but one crash-related injury every 15 seconds. Traffic crashes are the leading cause of death in the U.S. for people ages 6-33, and their economic cost is estimated to be \$150 billion per year.

Last year 117 people lost their lives on roads and highways in New Hampshire. As part of the on-going effort to increase highway safety and put the focus on saving lives, the New Hampshire Department of Transportation is a supporter of the first annual “Put The Brakes On Fatalities Day”, scheduled for October 10, 2001.

The “Put The Brakes on Fatalities” coalition is comprised of more than 40 national engineering and safety organizations, federal, state and local government agencies and private sector companies working together to reduce the death and injury toll of motor vehicle crashes. The coalition seeks to reduce traffic fatalities through three main areas: Driver Behavior, Vehicle Equipment, Design and Maintenance, and Roadway Design, Signage and Improvements.

Some facts to remember for saving lives on New Hampshire's roads:

- Driver Behavior – Drunk driving, speeding, and drowsy, aggressive and distracted driving continue to be major problems on our roads and bridges. Motorists should slow down, drive defensively, and wear all appropriate protective gear – like seat belts and motorcycle helmets.
- Major factors leading to crashes include driver distraction, poor visibility resulting from fog, dust storms or adverse weather.
- The National Transportation Safety Board has found that fatigue or drowsiness is a significant factor in run-off-the-road crashes.
- \$100 million spent on highway safety improvements will save 145 lives over a 10-year period, according to a study conducted by the Federal Highway Administration.
- Roadway improvements such as wider stripes and shoulders; better lighting and brighter, highly reflective signs and devices; intersection improvements, median barriers (where it is practical to do so) and rumble strips will help save lives.

For more information on the Internet, go to www.brakesonfatalities.org

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